

THE GENERIC NAMES FOR THE GIANT SALAMANDERS: PROPOSED
SUPPRESSION OF *PROTEOCORDYLUS* EICHWALD, 1831 AND
PALAEOTRITON FITZINGER, 1837. Z.N.(S.) 1751
(AMPHIBIA, CAUDATA)

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In the year 1837 Tschudi published two generic names within the group of giant salamanders:

- (a) *Andrias* Tschudi (1837 : 545), was based on fossil specimens generally known as "Homo tristis diluvii testis"; type-species, by monotypy, *Andrias scheuchzeri* Tschudi, 1837 (= *scheuchzeri* Holl, 1831).
- (b) *Megalobatrachus* Tschudi (1837 : 547) was based on material of the recent Japanese giant salamander: type-species, by monotypy, *Megalobatrachus sieboldi* Tschudi, 1837 (= *japonicus* Temminck, 1837).

(2) A third generic name within this group of salamanders is based on the recent species of North America: *Cryptobranchus* Leuckart (1821 : 260), type-species, by monotypy, *Cryptobranchus salamandroides* Leuckart, 1821 (= *alle-ganiensis* Daudin, 1802).

(3) All these generic names are available names under the provisions of the code; their validity is a matter of taxonomy. Some authors (e.g. Bronn, 1838 : 1166; Thenius, 1954 : 174; Wahler, 1965 : 35) recognize one genus only, *Cryptobranchus*; Thenius divides *Cryptobranchus* into subgenera *Cryptobran-chus*, *Megalobatrachus* and *Andrias*. Others regard *Cryptobranchus* as a separate genus, different from the palaearctic representatives: *Megalobatrachus* and *Andrias*. Under the name *Andrias* these are grouped within a single genus, again and in recent times by Westphal (1958). Relative priority is given in this case to *Andrias*, one of the contemporaneous names; this preference is based on an action by H. v. Meyer (1860 : 51) which is valid under the provisions of Article 24a. Still others distinguish three different genera as they feel uncertain about the identity of the fossil *Andrias* and the recent *Megalobatrachus* (of which all anatomical details, ecology and ethology, including reproduction, are known).

(4) No action by the Commission is recommended as far as these three very well-known names, *Andrias*, *Megalobatrachus* and *Cryptobranchus*, are concerned. They are discussed here only for clarification of the nomenclatorial background and as the basis of related problems.

(5) In 1831, Eichwald published a generic name, *Proteocordylus*; he (1831 : 165) attributes this name to Cuvier, but Cuvier never published it. This generic name is based on the nominal species *Proteocordylus diluvii* Eichwald, 1831, which by monotypy, is its type-species. *P. diluvii* is an objective synonym of *Andrias scheuchzeri*. Consequently, *Proteocordylus* proves to be a senior objective synonym of *Andrias*. There is no doubt that a revival of the long forgotten name *Proteocordylus* (for the last time it has been used was by Stejneger, 1907 : 3) is highly undesirable. As a "nomen oblitum" it should be suppressed by the Commission.

(6) There is still another name which potentially could disturb established usage of *Andrias*, i.e. of the names discussed in paragraphs (1) to (4): *Palaeotriton* Fitzinger (1837 : 186). This name is based on the nominal species *Salamandra gigantea* H. v. Meyer (1832 : 117), which is an objective synonym of *scheuchzeri* and a homonym of *Salamandra gigantea* Barton, 1808 (= *Cryptobranchus alleganiensis* Daudin, 1802). Both names, *Andrias* and *Palaeotriton*, were published within the same year; but it remains uncertain if *Palaeotriton* has been published earlier than September, 1837 (the date of *Andrias*). After its introduction into literature by the original author, *Palaeotriton* has never been used again as a valid name. So it seems an extreme of a "nomen oblitum" and consequently it is proposed that it should be suppressed, under its plenary powers, by the Commission.

(7) In detail, the following actions by the Commission are recommended:

(1) to use its plenary powers to suppress the following names:

(a) *Proteocordylus* Eichwald, 1831;

(b) *Palaeotriton* Fitzinger, 1837.

(2) to place the following names, suppressed under the plenary powers under (1) above, on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology:

(a) *Proteocordylus* Eichwald, 1831, a senior objective synonym of *Andrias* Tschudi, 1837;

(b) *Palaeotriton* Fitzinger, 1837, a contemporaneous name and an objective synonym of *Andrias* Tschudi, 1837.

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